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THE HAUNTED CASK.

AFTERNOON on a bright, warm, voluptuous day, such as only the tropics can produce; in the foreground, the great panorama of Bombay outspread in the dazzling sunshine; behind, the broad blue sweep of the encircling sea, now in one of its holiday humours, dancing and sparkling as if nothing so wicked as a storm had ever entered its mind; and in the centre of the picture, the good ship *Australian*, bound from Bombay to Southampton, with freight and passengers as per advertisement.

The packet's time and steam are both very nearly up, and most of the 'homeward-bound' are already on board. Several bronzed and bearded shekaries, laden with skins, not of wine, but of bears and tigers, and nervously anxious about the comfortable stowage of their favourite rifles; a good many very yellow-looking disciples of the H.E.I.C.S. overwhelmed by an avalanche of pugree; swarms of picturesque native servants, looking wofully chop-fallen at the prospect of a voyage across the 'black water' to that dismal island where there is no sun, and a great deal too much fog; a statistical M.P. who has been out here to gather materials for a book upon the cost of the Indian Army, extracts from which he insists upon reading to every one he meets, a practice which has already earned him the name of the 'Ancient Mariner'; a diplomatic young engineer, who, having brought on board a huge and ferocious cockatoo, as a present for his rich aunt at home, has just had his thumb nearly bitten off by the savage animal, and is trying to look as if it didn't hurt him; two or three clergymen of various denominations, sedulously avoiding each other; sundry officers going home on leave; and, better than all, an abundance of ladies. Sprightly ladies who have lost their husbands, comforting forlorn ladies who have not yet found them; enterprising ladies who have been all over the world, patronising timid ladies who 'daren't go anywhere by themselves'; strong-minded ladies who have come out with the intention of extirpating heathenism

altogether (and are coming home without having done it), declaiming against the wicked obstinacy of the 'benighted idolaters'; and others besides, too numerous to mention.

But, although the packet might seem to be pretty well filled, the captain evidently does not think the tale complete, to judge by the way in which he is leaning over the side and looking shoreward. Plainly, there is 'something more coming,' as children say towards the end of a Christmas dinner; and here, sure enough, comes the 'something more' at last, in the form of a slight, girlish-looking, very pretty young lady, in deep mourning, attended by two maids and a whole boatful of luggage, conspicuous amid which, to the visible amazement of the lookers-on, is a huge, punchy, substantial-looking cask, capable of containing enough liquor to elevate the entire ship's company.

'Glad to see you again, Mrs Errington; hope you'll be comfortable with us,' says the captain heartily, as his new passenger comes timidly up the side. 'I've got all ready for you down below, and if there's anything else you'd like, you've only to name it.'

'Thank you very much, Captain Prescott,' answers the lady, in a timid little voice like the chirp of a shy canary. 'Will you be so *very* kind as to have these things taken down to my state-cabin—and—and that cask, please, along with them?'

'This moment, ma'am,' answers the gallant skipper, manfully keeping down the shade of surprise that struggles into his face at this unexpected postscript.—'George, just pass that cask down along with the lady's luggage, and see that it don't get hurt on the road.'

Fortunately, most of the passengers were too fully engrossed with their own concerns to notice the astounding 'lady's companion' which Mrs Errington thus commended to the captain's good offices; but the sailors were more observant. They exchanged looks big with solemn meaning; and a few hours later, when the shores of India had already begun to fade into the purple shadows of the evening sky, the 'cask-question' was brought

forward for serious consideration by the Conscript Fathers of the forecastle.

'Did yer ever?'

'Ain't that a pretty start, just?'

'Who'd ever ha' thought it?'

'Well, I am blowed! To think o' a niminy-piminy little creetur like that 'ere, what yer might blow away wi' a puff out o' a baccy-pipe, layin' in as much grog as 'ud serve a foremast-man for a twelvemonth!'

'Well, what o' that?' remarks sententiously old Jack Davitt, the Solomon of the forecastle. 'Mark my words, my bo's: it's just them as yer wouldn't expect to do things, what allus *does* do 'em!'

'It's a burnin' shame, anyhow—that's what it is!' strikes in Bill Sawyer, whose fiery complexion shews that his interest in the liquor question is not purely theoretical. 'To think o' one little bit of a 'ooman a-keepin' all that 'ere good stuff to herself, while there's hundreds o' God's creeturs a-pinin' (as one may say) for want on't!'

'Ay, Bill, yer may well be grumpy! sitch a lot o' lush aboard, and you not a-goin' to get none!'

'And then they talks o' *our* drinkin'!' pursues Bill, too indignant to notice this innuendo. 'Who ever seed one o' us drink a whole cask to once? And yet, I'll bet ye a week's grog, as that 'ere young 'ooman, when she gets ashore at Sou'ampton, 'ull be a-goin' on to everybody 'bout "the habituoal 'tosication o' English sailors!" Now what, I axes yer, what kind o' fair play d'ye call that 'ere?'

And the orator, overwhelmed by the thought of such monstrous injustice, relapses into gloomy silence.

But this theory speedily proves to be as unfounded as popular theories usually are. The way in which the obnoxious cask, when once fairly ensconced in a corner of Mrs Errington's state cabin, is walled in, or rather buried, by a mountain of trunks, boxes, and bags, amply vindicates the sobriety of its charming owner; for the most confirmed toper would hardly have taken the trouble to pull down and rebuild such a barricade every time that he might feel the need of 'a drop of comfort.' But the failure of this solution only enhanced the interest of the puzzle, not merely with the sailors, but among the passengers likewise. And, moreover, the mystery seemed to concentrate itself exclusively upon the cask; for with regard to herself, Mrs Errington (whose winning ways and delicate beauty speedily made her a universal favourite) had no reserve whatever. It was soon known that she had come out from England about three years before with her husband, a wealthy civilian, considerably older than herself; that Mr Errington had died in one of the up-country stations, bequeathing her the whole of his property; and that she was now returning to England, with the intention of remaining there. This union of wealth, beauty, and friendlessness, combined with the charmingly helpless timidity of her manner, at once laid the whole masculine section of the community at her feet—from pompous old Mr Chutney, of the great Calcutta house of Chutney and Currie, down to mischievous little Ensign O'Naughtie, who was three years younger than herself—but the old adage of 'Love me, love

my dog' was in this case anything but verified. Three-fourths of the bachelor passengers loved Mrs Errington, or *said* they did; but they were very far from loving her cask likewise. Their only feeling towards it was one of direct personal hostility. An article so closely guarded by its mistress, and involving a secret which she refused to impart to them, was clearly a dangerous rival; and but for the manner in which this unpopular talisman was entombed beneath unnumbered packages, some of these audacious spirits would very probably have attempted its destruction, or, at anyrate, the probing of the mystery of its contents. 'Too bad, sir—altogether too bad!' said Mr Chutney to his friend and confidant Noliver, of the H.E.I.C.S. 'We ought to memorialise the captain about it; 'pon my word, we ought. It's intolerable that a community of respectable Englishtmen should be hag-ridden in this way by a confounded cask, that nobody knows anything about.'

During the first part of the voyage—namely, from Bombay to the Cape—this novel kind of Pandora's box had a clear field; for after the first bustle of settling down had subsided, the monotony of the passage was unbroken. No shark was obliging enough to catch himself for the general amusement. The albacores and flying-fish obstinately declined to 'break the glittering surface with their elfin gambols,' according to the form prescribed for them by would-be nautical novelists. Not a single waterspout could be induced to shew its face; and considerable excitement was created one morning by the M.P. announcing that 'the steward had just mentioned to him having heard the second engineer say that one of the men thought he had seen a sail.' In this universal dearth of events, it was not surprising that Mrs Errington's mysterious possession should assume as prominent an interest as if it had been the casque of Mambrino himself, or that which crushed Master Conrad so unexpectedly in the *Castle of Otranto*. The Letters of Junius, the Man with the Iron Mask, were not more absorbingly interesting, or more hopelessly unfathomable. It became the subject of more wagers than the Derby or Mr Wilkie Collins' *Dead Secret*. The captain and first-mate discussed it nightly over their eight o'clock grog; the blue-jacketed parliament in the cook's galley resolved itself into a perpetual Committee of Inquiry on the subject, and always ended by moving that 'there must be summat wrong 'bout it'—John Bull's invariable verdict upon anything which he cannot understand. The pretty Miss Fisher, from Poonah, being 'surprised by a wholly unexpected proposal' from Captain Veriphast of the —th Native Infantry, accepted him conditionally upon his 'finding out all about that horrid cask.' The literary M.P. gave it a place in his book upon the Indian Army. Judge Uppin-law of the High Court, who was as fond of technical definitions as he was of brandy-pawnee, 'summed up' Mrs Errington as 'a positive angel modified by a latent cask.' Young Melloughdey, the poet of the Mullagatawny Club (going home on leave), actually worked it into a song, which he wrote off the Mauritius, commencing:

My soul is like a spacious cask,
With Love hooped up within;

and Mr Chutney, after supping upon cold pork

and Welsh rabbit, washed down with two bottles of stout, awoke yelling from a hideous dream of being crushed to death by the National Debt in the shape of a cask. The young engineer suggested that the mystic puncheon must contain some new fashion of crinoline, packed in that way to preserve its rounded proportions. One of Mrs Errington's chosen female intimates—a lady of proverbial courage—hit upon the brilliant idea of asking her, point-blank, what the cask contained; but the charming widow only cast down her eyes, and answered, with her most bewitchingly childish air, that it was a special keepsake, which no one must know about yet.

As the voyage wore on, a new subject of interest began to dispute the supremacy of the famous cask—namely, the competition of suitors for the good graces of its charming owner. This rivalry had now grown more defined and palpable, owing to the fact that (as Colonel Rasper of the —th Plungers elegantly expressed it) ‘the pace was getting severe, and the weedy ones were beginning to tail off.’ Captain Veriphast had been ‘withdrawn’ by his attachment to Miss Fisher, whose name the young engineer, his cabin-fellow, un gallantly paraphrased into ‘the judicious Hooker.’ Ensign O’Naughtie, after a day or two’s philandering, had likewise ‘dropped out of the running’—remarking, with the air of a connoisseur, that these *very* young women were not his style; which, she being only twenty-two, and he fully nineteen, was natural enough. Old Mr Chutney, who at first seemed to be further gone than any one, found a salutary check to his passion in ‘the unwarrantable way in which he had been bullied by that abominable cask,’ which appeared to have assumed in his eyes the haunting individuality of an evil spirit.

But, notwithstanding these defections, a large number of worshippers still remained true to their allegiance, and of these the most conspicuous was unquestionably Major Leyd E. Kyller, of the —th Light Infantry. Rich enough to have no thought of marriage as a speculation, *blasé* enough to care little for flirtation as an amusement, he had at first devoted himself to the charming widow with that quiet, confident, half-condescending ease with which the experienced *militaire* of our time is wont to monopolise the prettiest woman in a company. But he was playing with edged tools. Mrs Errington was just one of those dangerous little creatures whom men pet and protect as children till they suddenly find themselves falling in love with them as women; and it soon became abundantly evident that the novice was more than a match for the veteran. It was curious to see how this man—the admired wit of Bombay dinner-tables, the chosen leader of Simla picnics and up-country gatherings—lost all his wonted fluency and self-reliance as soon as he entered the enchanted circle; and to notice the deep, earnest, tender look which softened and almost glorified his disciplined face, while he talked with the one woman whom he cared for. The finer nature of the man was aroused, as it always must be, at the first touch of a pure and manly affection; and as it awoke, all his apt compliments and well-turned phrases, all the conversational sleights-of-hand which had served him with ordinary women, forsook him one by one. At times he was so absolutely silent in her presence as to make

an Irish brother-officer remark that ‘the Meejor niver spoke a worrd when he was talking to Mrs Errington.’ Perhaps the young lady herself was not wholly unconscious of this; but only once did she hazard any allusion to it. They happened to be left together on deck for a few minutes, and the major instantly became so flagrantly tongue-tied, that she ventured to rally him upon the loss of his proverbial fluency.

‘How very thoughtful you are to-day, Major Kyller: you must be inventing some wonderful compliment for one of the ladies yonder. I suppose they take up so many of your pretty speeches, that you have none to spare for poor little me?’

The words themselves were not much; but the tone in which they were spoken, and the look that shot them home, might have shaken any man’s nerve. The strong soldier shivered from head to foot, as he had never done in marching up to the muzzles of the big guns at Sobraon.

‘So you think I’m nothing but a flatterer!’ said he bitterly. ‘Well, perhaps I am to the others; but with *you* it’s different. I can’t look in your face, and insult you by stringing together pretty speeches such as I’d repeat to any woman I met by chance in a drawing-room. In *your* presence, I must speak the truth, come what may.’

She had the tact to change the conversation, and to break off their *tête-à-tête* as soon as possible; but there was a shade more of kindness in her manner toward him from that time. Let small wits sneer as they will at ‘the power of flattery over women,’ simple manly earnestness has its weight, nevertheless.

All this time our friend Bill Sawyer (whom we have neglected far too much of late) was anything but easy in his mind. He had indeed, in common with every one else on board, abandoned the theory of Mrs Errington’s taste for liquor; but this only whetted his curiosity with respect to the mysterious cask. It haunted him like the recollection of an unfulfilled duty. He felt himself humbled, both as a man and a sailor, by the existence of a secret which he could not penetrate, and a supply of liquor which he had not shared. He became silent and meditative, as if absorbed in the elaboration of some great project; and, one evening, after a silence so prolonged as to make Jem Blackett, the wit of the forecastle, hint that ‘Bill must ha’ run his tongue aground awixt two o’ his back-teeth,’ he suddenly began as follows: ‘Tell ye what it is, my bo’s—I can’t get that ‘ere cask out o’ my head!’

‘Which on ‘em, Bill? There’s a many casks got into your head since you fust cum aboard!’

‘Stop your chaff, and listen to me. Fust goin’ off, I was fool enough to think as how that ‘ere blessed little hangel meant to drink it all herself, but now I know better.’

‘In course yer does, Bill, now that you wants some on’t yourself.’

‘Just hold your jaw, and listen to me, will yer? If there ain’t no liquor in that ‘ere cask, why, then, there ain’t; but if there *be*, why, then, ye know, liquor’s liquor. Now, that’s just what I means to find out, afore I’m a day older.’

‘And how are you a-goin’ for to do that, Bill?’

‘I knows what I knows,’ answered Bill oracularly. ‘I warn’t born at six o’clock yesterday mornin’, I warn’t. Just you wait a bit.’

On the following evening, Bill appeared before

his congregated messmates with an air of conscious merit.

'Well, my hearties, I told yer as I'd find out, and I done it!'

'Long life to yer, Bill! you're the boy. How did yer do the trick?'

'Well, I goes aft, so as to come close past where Madam Herrinton was a-sittin', and says I to Sam Jones : "Sam," says I, "if this 'ere heat holds on much longer, some of them spirit-casks 'ull be a-bustin', for sure!" My eyes! you should just ha' seed the face as madam put on, for all the world like a land-lubber when he begins for to feel the up-and-down o' blue water. That 'ere cask's chock-full o' liquor, I'll take my davy; and if I don't have a taste on't afore ever we sights Old England agin, I'm a Dutchman!'

'But, hark ye, Bill,' struck in Jem Blackett, who was beginning to be jealous of Bill's sudden rise to distinction, 'if yer goes and takes some un else's grog, ain't that rayther like thievin', somehow?'

'Jem,' answered Bill in the tone of Socrates 'shutting up' Protagoras, 'you talks like a fool. Answer me this, will yer? Ain't liquor made for to be drunk?'

Unanimous agreement on the part of the assembly.

'Secondly,' pursued Bill with a logical air, 'if you grants me as how liquor's made to be drunk, don't it stand to reason as it can't be drunk if there ain't nobody to drink it?'

Fresh signs of assent to this incontestable proposition.

'Well, then,' concluded Bill with the calm triumph of a great reasoner who has succeeded in descending to the level of his audience, 'it's as plain as the compass that if somebody's got a lot o' liquor, and don't drink it, somebody else must. If folk will misuse the gifts o' Providence that 'ere way, I feels it my dooty to prevent 'em. Now, hark ye, mates, I promises, and vows solemnly, here, afore yer all, as I'll have a swig out o' that 'ere cask afore the end o' the vyge, if I dies for it!'

In this wise did Bill Sawyer, bravely as any Knight of the Round Table, undertake this new Quest of the Sangreal.

The day which followed that of Bill Sawyer's memorable vow was marked by something which the methodical Judge Uppinlaw chronicled in his diary as follows : 'Wednesday, the 14th, at 10.30 A.M. precisely, an event occurred.' The 'event' in question was the appearance of a dark floating object, standing apparently right across the bows of the steamer. The passengers clustered along the side to watch it, and conjectures flew from mouth to mouth : 'A porpoise!' 'A shark!' 'A whale!' 'A piece of wreck!' But none of these guesses proved to be correct—it was only an empty cask.

'Where can that have come from?' asked Mr Chutney, staring at it as if he expected it to enter into a verbal explanation.

'Don't you know?' answered Ensign O'Naughtie, in an awe-stricken whisper. 'It's followed us all the way from Bombay, to demand the release of its twin-brother, unlawfully detained by Mrs Errington.'

This explanation so tickled the fancy of the sailors (several of whom were standing within earshot), that it speedily flew through the whole ship's company; and, for some time after, whenever anything was seen floating towards them, the tars

would call to each other : 'Look out, Jack—here's another o' them *brothers* a-comin'!'

But this marvel was eclipsed two days later, by one far more considerable. About noon on the ensuing Friday, one of the 'look-outs' gave notice of something on the starboard bow, which looked like the hull of a small vessel. A nearer approach shewed the stranger to be a complete wreck ; and the captain, more to clear his conscience than with any hope of doing good, sent a boat off to her, in case any living thing should still be on board. The literary M.P. fired with the brilliant idea of drawing an historical parallel between this wreck and the Indian Army, obtained permission to accompany the exploring party, and took his place in the stern-sheets with an air of austere dignity, turning a deaf ear to Ensign O'Naughtie's offer of a piece of brown paper to wrap up the wreck and bring it back with him.

All eyes eagerly watched the course of the boat ; and when she was at length seen to run alongside the wreck, the spectators let their imagination riot in speculations as to the contents of the stranger, and the history of her mishap. One enthusiast, just in *The Count of Monte Cristo*, hinted at cases of priceless jewels and plethoric bags of doubloons ; another, of a gloomier turn, pictured a deck heaped with corpses, and crimson with blood. The young engineer suggested that the crew must have eaten one another, and that the last man had probably died of indigestion. The ladies brushed up their recollections of the Flying Dutchman, and comforted themselves by recalling the testimony of the best authorities, that he is only to be met with off the Cape.* At length the boat returned, and the adventurous M.P. made his appearance visibly chop-fallen.

'It's a flagrant swindle, sir!' he exclaimed, in his favourite 'denunciation of the Army Estimates' tone and manner. 'There is nothing on board worth seeing—nothing at all, in fact, except a number of empty casks.'

'What! more casks?' cried Judge Uppinlaw, startled out of his dignity by this fresh recurrence of the universal bugbear.

'Just as I feared,' said Ensign O'Naughtie, in a tone of calm despair. 'All is over with us. That one we saw floating the other day must have gone and told all the rest, and now they're all coming at once.'

'Sir, this is no laughing matter!' broke in Mr Chutney indignantly. 'It is a palpable infringement of the liberty of the subject; it is persecution, sir—persecution in the worst sense of the term! Good Heavens, gentlemen! are we, a body of respectable men and British subjects, to be actually haunted by a swarm of casks, as if one of us had murdered a wine-merchant, or (what would be even more reprehensible) omitted to pay his bill? I cannot stand it. It's positively wearing my life out. If I were to die at this moment, I should solemnly aver that I died of—'

'A determination of casks to the head,' put in the young engineer slyly; and the company, who were well acquainted with Mr Chutney's convivial habits, laughed with such hearty good-will that

* Considering that we call the Dutch a prossie people, it is rather odd that the finest supernatural legend extant should be fastened upon them. The Norse traditions, however, contain a somewhat similar story.

the insulted potentate was fain to retire in high dudgeon. But it was fated—though he knew it not—that he should be speedily and surely avenged.

At the Cape they picked up two or three roistering sportsmen, whose coming gave fresh life to the flagging diversions of the ‘cabin society.’ Various amusements had by this time come into fashion; and the new arrivals, actively assisted by Ensign O’Naughtie and the young engineer, set themselves manfully to the promotion of these, and the devising of fresh ones. Quoits were popular with the young subs, many of whom had not yet worn off the skill acquired at Eton or Rugby. The Indian sportsmen and their African confrères held daily target-practice at floating bottles; while the ladies, with their usual thoroughgoing partisanship, lost and won countless pairs of gloves upon the competition. Whist, écarté, and chess found favour among the civilians; but all alike bore part in the waltzing, which took place on the after-deck every night, with decorations contrived by the hundred-handed steward, and a profusion of coloured lamps, ‘to assist the moon,’ as Ensign O’Naughtie patronisingly remarked. There was even some talk of private theatricals (there always is on these long voyages, and it never comes to anything), but the scheme broke down at the first rehearsal, nobody appearing to do much except the prompter, whose duty seemed to consist in reciting the whole play at the top of his voice.

Meanwhile, Mrs Errington’s flirtation with the major appeared to most observers to have died a natural death; just as, when the guns cease firing to let the assaulting column rush on, men unversed in war might think the siege abandoned. For several days she had sedulously avoided him; and he, singularly enough, appeared not a whit cast down thereby. Love is not always blind; and what he saw might well give him courage. Mrs Errington’s short-lived confidence in her power over this strong will and daring nature had vanished as suddenly as it came. She could not forget the stern emphasis of the words which rang in her ears night and day: ‘In your presence I must tell the truth, come what will!’ His tone and manner had told it only too clearly already; and she felt that, when he came to utter that truth in actual words, she must perforce answer him plainly, without artifice or evasion. And what answer was she to give? The time had been when she could have laughed him into silence, or abashed him with a look; but now, she dared not even attempt it. For it must always be, that, sooner or later, however caprice or passion may for a time reverse their positions, the stronger nature *will* assert itself, and the weaker give way. Every woman feels instinctively, that, in making a man bow down to her, she is not in her right place; that her nature is to worship, rather than to be worshipped; and that this temporary ascendancy must one day be atoned by utter surrender. Well may she entreat for time to consider such an alternative; but time is precisely what her antagonist will seldom if ever allow her.

In this fashion things proceeded for about a week, during which time the indefatigable ensign (who, though considerably the youngest of the community, appeared to have fairly carried his election as Master of the Ceremonies) conceived the brilliant idea of adding to the evening amusements what he was pleased to call ‘an orchestra between

the acts’—or, in other words, a few songs in the intervals of the dances, serving the double purpose of varying the entertainment, and giving a breathing-time to the less practised dancers. The new plan had an immense success. A vast amount of hitherto unsuspected talent was suddenly brought to light; and Colonel Footyn Grave, a wiry old *sabre* who had lost a leg in some forgotten skirmish of the Sikh war, astonished the whole community by his performance of the brave old German song of *The Crippled Soldier*, which, as he naively remarked, had always struck him as particularly appropriate to himself:

A cannon-ball comes flying,
And knocks my leg off clear;
Well, where’s the use of crying?
Wood’s cheap enough down here.
One shoe and stocking less—and so
So much more money saved, you know,
To buy good German beer!

At last there came a day when the major spoke out. On a quiet evening, when all was still except the sounds of merry-making on the after-deck, he espied her a little apart from the dancers, leaning over the side in the shadowy splendour of the moonlight, and gazing dreamily into the glittering foam. Now or never! He went straight to her as he would have marched up to a battery, and asked bravely enough, but with a tightening round his heart, which he had never felt when he threw himself bareheaded among the Sikh tulwars, the question upon which hung the whole of his future life.

She must have been less than woman had she not been prepared for such an occurrence; but, nevertheless, it tasked her sorely when it came. To give no answer was impossible: to answer decisively, in the flutter of her unstrung nerves, was almost equally so. Like a true woman, she essayed to temporise.

‘Give me time,’ she pleaded, ‘only a little time, to think it over.’

‘Time to think it over!’ echoed the major’s deep voice, with the faintest tinge of scorn in its tone: ‘have you been unconscious of it, then, till now?’

A Dutch fortress, when hard pressed, opens its sluices and inundates the whole scene of action; a woman, when driven to extremity, invariably resorts to the same expedient: Mrs Errington burst into tears.

‘You’re too hard upon me,’ she sobbed, in the tone of a distressed child: ‘how can you talk to me like this, when my poor husband has been only three months in his—grave!’ (She brought out the last word with an effort, as if it required some thought to recollect whether he *had* a grave or not.) ‘How can you expect me to think of a new love already? If I were to forget him so soon, I could not expect him to lie quiet in his grave!’

The words had barely passed her lips, when the air shook with a tremendous explosion from the cabin, followed by a yell like that of a scalded hyena—and then the sound of a heavy fall.

‘Murder!’
‘Suicide!’
‘Boiler burst!’
‘Powder-flask!’
‘Sprung a leak!’
Shouting these and other conjectures, the whole

throng rushed pell-mell into the cabin, where a strange sight awaited them. But in order to explain all this, we must go back a little.

Bill Sawyer, like a true Englishman, had never once wavered in his resolution, or ceased to watch for a chance of carrying it out; but for some time Fate seemed persistently adverse. The covered cask remained securely entombed in its sarcophagus of baggage; and the few flying visits which Bill contrived to pay to the first-class cabin served only to assure him of this unwelcome fact. Could he but have got the cabin to himself for a single quarter of an hour, his brawny arms would have made light of the intervening barricade; but this was precisely what he could never succeed in doing. Seldom enough could he coin any plausible pretext for intruding upon the sacred ground; and even when he did, the coast never seemed to be perfectly clear.

'Too bad, by jingo!' growled the disappointed explorer, as he returned one evening from a fruitless reconnaissance. 'I'm blest if there ain't always somebody a-hangin' about that 'ere cabin, without bein' axed.'

Mr Sawyer's righteous indignation probably hindered him from seeing how completely this remark applied to himself; but his shipmates were quicker of apprehension, and greeted it with a roar of laughter that made his ears tingle. In fact, the poor fellow's life had now become a burden to him, from the unsparing banter of his comrades upon the long-delayed fulfilment of his rash promise. From old Jack Davitt down to little Joe the cabin-boy, every one had his fling at Bill.

'Bill, my hearty, ain't yer gettin' awful thirsty, a-waitin' for your liquor so long?'

'You'd best look sharp, Bill; if yer don't do the trick afore we sights Old England, we'll have yer up for par-jerry—blest if we don't!'

'Tell yer what, Bill—you go and drown yerself, and then they'll give yer a swig o' the lush to bring yer round!'

'Come, boys, you leave Bill alone; don't yer see he's a-goin' to wait till the last day of the vyge, and then drink the whole cask at one swig!'

And so on by the hour, till poor Bill began to have serious thoughts of murder or suicide.

But, as the good old Russian proverb has it, 'To every man his hour, if he will but wait for it,' and deliverance came at last to the much-enduring Bill in a very unexpected way. On the very day of the major's proposal, Mrs Errington had suddenly recollected some ravishing article of mourning toilet which she had not yet introduced to the notice of the community, and which (according to the immemorial custom of articles when particularly wanted) turned out to be in the most un-get-at-able of her many boxes, the very foundation-stone of the great pyramid. As a natural consequence, the whole edifice had to be pulled down; and Mrs Errington's servants, who received strict orders to put the things in their places again forthwith, postponed the execution of the order (as usual) till such time as they should have nothing better to do, and left everything *in statu quo*. Bill—who, having satisfied himself that all the passengers were on deck as usual, had stolen in, hopelessly enough, to go through the form of reconnoitring—was not slow to appreciate this astounding gift of fortune.

'Talk o' miracles!' muttered the devout adven-

turer; 'if this ain't one, I'm a Dutchman! Here's a lot o' good liquor a-runnin' to waste, raal unchrist'n like; and here am I, an honest sailor, wantin' to make a good use on 't; and here's the way opened for me all to once, just like as it was done o' purpose! Folk may well say as how there's a providence in everything!'

With this pious acknowledgment, Bill stepped briskly forward, and had just laid his hand upon the long-coveted prize, when suddenly, with a crash like the report of a mitrailleuse, the top of the cask flew in shivers, and up from the frothing liquid sprang a human head, gaunt, livid, ghastly, with lack-lustre eyes and grinning teeth, which, in the dim light, seemed to gnash as if thirsting for blood.

What Bill said or did he could never recollect. According to the subsequent testimony of the steward (who was the first to arrive on the scene of action), he 'sung out as if he was a-hailin' a ferry-boat across the Channel, and then flopped down as flat as a flounder!' At all events, he lay senseless in the doorway of Mrs Errington's state-cabin, half in and half out, just as the tide of passengers came pouring in *en masse*.

'Well, I declare,' cried Mrs Errington, sobbing with indignation, 'that horrid man has actually been trying to steal the spirits out of my cask! I promised my poor dear husband that I'd carry his body home to England; but I said nothing about it, for fear of those dreadful sailors making a work about having a dead body on board; and now the cask's burst with the heat, and that wicked wretch has got a fine fright—and serve him quite right too!'

So saying, she fainted away in the outstretched arms of Major Kyller, who, anticipating some such catastrophe, had skilfully taken up his position beside her. To this day, the old soldier has not forgotten the incident. 'My wife may look delicate, sir,' he will say, 'but she's not one of your hysterical sort, I can promise you! She never fainted but once in her whole life, and that was on board of a Bombay steamer, when—&c. &c.'

But however bad Mrs Errington might be, poor Bill Sawyer was infinitely worse. He had indeed 'got a fine fright'—so fine, in fact, as to keep him under the doctor's hands for the remainder of the voyage. The first act of his convalescence was to take the pledge; and he is now (to use his own phrase) 'drawn up high and dry on shore,' as the landlord of a temperance hotel, in the club-room of which he occasionally figures as a teetotal lecturer, with brilliant success. But he has never forgotten his terrible adventure; and to this very day (as you can hardly talk with him for half an hour without discovering) he remains firmly convinced that the Enemy of Mankind, for some inscrutable purpose of his own, introduced himself into the fatal cask with the view of entrapping him, Bill Sawyer, into 'drinkin' some o' him,' and thereby, of course, forfeiting all hope of well-being both here and hereafter. The story of his rash vow, and its supernatural defeat, entertains a wondering circle every night in the parlour of the Teetotalers' Arms; and the narrator (who, toward the close of his tale, never fails to call attention to the neat little clock on the chimney-piece, presented to him, in token of forgiveness, by Mrs Major Kyller) invariably winds up his recital with the same emphatic sentence:

'So, then, d'ye see, my lads, when I cum out o' dock, and was in cruisin' horder agin, I made a solemn vow as I'd never touch a drop o' liquor no more, to the very end o' my born days, for no consideration whatmever; and I think I may say as I've kep' that 'ere vow a trifle better nor I did t' other un!'

THE SUBWEALDEN EXPLORATION.

The Subwealden Exploration, which was brought prominently forward at the meeting of the British Association last autumn, seems likely to stamp a permanent and practical character on the anniversary meeting held at Brighton. The scheme to ascertain by actual experiment the nature and thickness of the geological strata lying immediately beneath the lowest series of the Wealden formation in Kent and Sussex, was introduced by Mr Henry Willett, well known as a local geologist; and his energy and influence doubtless contributed greatly to enlist the sympathy of his scientific friends, and to secure the liberal assistance of the landowners of Sussex, as well as others moved with a regard to the probable remunerative results of the undertaking. The enthusiastic interest at first displayed on the subject was probably in a measure due to the scarcity and consequent high price of coal; since the hope with many ran high that the discovery of the precious mineral would be the reward of their labour. There was, however, something singularly attractive and appropriate in taking advantage of the gathering of savants and those interested in the advancement of science, to bring forward as a matter of practical inquiry 'the only geological problem left unsolved in England'—namely, 'What next underlies the Wealden formation?' and to secure for one's own county the honour of settling a question on which a diversity of opinion exists among those whose peculiar taste or calling has led them carefully to consider the points at issue.

Sussex presents a wide range to the geological observer; while chalk is generally regarded as its chief characteristic, the Wealden clay is a more extensive if less strongly marked district. The unique fossiliferous beds at Bracklesham are well known, and at Selsey is to be seen a remnant of a definite tertiary period, of which at no other place in England is there any record. It was in this variety that the home labours and careful observation of Dr Mantell were carried on. The old county town of Lewes was his birthplace, but at Brighton he was for years professionally engaged and most generally known. To his influence Mr Willett attributes embracing geology in his boyish days as a recreation as well as a study, the result of which was the unique collection of chalk fossils which he has presented to the Brighton Town Museum. Even the ordinary working of the chalk is the means of continually bringing to light objects regarded as curiosities by the workmen, who become experts in finding them. The inquiries frequently made for fossils at the pit's mouth have caused them to be regarded as articles to which some value is attached, while the demand in itself shews that general attention is now directed to geological pursuits. The growing acquaintance with all that is discovered in a well-worked district, doubtless stimulated curiosity to know

something about that which lies in close proximity, and to which total ignorance attaches an air of mystery.

Whatever may be discovered by the exploration, it will be clearly recognised that a boring which shall perforate the entire depth of the Wealden formation will be the probable means of throwing light on the agencies and physical laws which in far remote periods governed the universe no less surely than in the present time—the evidence and record of which has been kept hid in the deposit, while the markings of the waves have been registering the changes elsewhere taking place, which may in their turn become the guide in determining some future investigations.

The Wealden formation is, in truth, the product of a vast lake which covered an area larger than the whole south-east of England, at a time before a particle of the chalk hills of Sussex had been formed. The fresh-water deposits exhibited in the counties of Kent, Surrey, and Sussex consist generally of thick accumulations of sands and sandstones for a lower or earlier part, surmounted by a great argillaceous deposit popularly known as Weald clay. The Geological Survey has adopted an arrangement and subdivision of these beds by which in descending order the sands and clays alternate; thus, after the Weald clay, follows Tunbridge Wells sands, then Wadhurst clay, after which Ashdown sands, and then the Ashburnham beds. The names prefixed, it will be observed, are those of the locality where the particular clay or sand predominates, but as there is no definite line separating these, they may together be regarded on the whole as a consecutive fresh-water series. The depth of the depositions varies as a matter of course, but it has been estimated that the lower sandy group averages a thickness of 800 feet; while the upper Weald clay, which probably is subject to the greatest variety, has been judged to have a depth of at least 450 feet.

The scientific importance of an undertaking that will set at rest matters of doubt and controversy, can scarcely be over-estimated. It was indeed fully realised by Mr Godwin-Austen, who, as president of the Geological section, brought it under the notice of the meeting of the British Association; Mr Willett at the same time explaining the definite object in view, and the practical measures that had been taken to secure success. Separate committees were formed, and the hearty co-operation thereby secured of those who expressed enthusiasm in favour of the exploration. Among the friends and supporters of the scheme was the late Emperor Napoleon III. who, with the Empress and their son, were staying at Brighton at the time, and were present at the meeting. Not only was the Emperor's attention awakened on the subject, but he afterwards made many inquiries about it, and was interested in the progress of the work.

The sum of £1800 was quickly either contributed or promised to the fund, so that it was hoped that no embarrassment would be caused by an empty exchequer. The selection of a site where the boring was to be made became, therefore, the point to be considered; the problem set being clearly comprehended, the practical solving of it could be approached with safety and certainty. The district wherein are situated the lowest series of the exposed Ashburnham beds was surveyed, and a site chosen near to Battle, in

the parish of Brightling. Permission, or rather conditional permission was gained from the owner and occupier of Rounden Wood, for 'therein the favoured spot was found,' for the works to be carried on according to the direction of the executive committee. When, however, preliminary arrangements had been made for these to commence, a serious obstacle arose, for the tenant withdrew his consent; nor would he allow the land in his occupancy to be disturbed unless he had a legal guarantee to empower him to stop the works at any time it might please him to do so. As a matter of course, none of those who were zealous promoters of the scheme, or those who were responsible for the fund that had been raised to carry out the object, could consent to the trammels of any such agreement. The site first chosen had, therefore, to be abandoned, and a fresh survey was made. The delay thus occasioned was disappointing to the eager public, and taxing to the energies of the officials. Yet it has ceased to be a matter of regret that the explorers created a feeling of distrust and alarm, similar to the award of engineering pioneers of an earlier day, and that they found themselves driven from the field. The fresh survey caused two sites to be regarded with nearly equal favour. The peculiar advantages and drawbacks of each were duly considered, the selection was at last made, and then the works commenced. But a fresh series of difficulties arose, for it became apparent, on the removal of the superincumbent soil, that the strata was singularly contorted, slanting nearly fifty degrees. It was therefore considered prudent to abandon this site, and that which had held the conflicting claim in the estimation of the committees was now universally pronounced to be eligible. The third and last time of the season of doubt has been followed by the relief afforded by experimental working, and confirmed by the officers of the Board of the Geological Survey Department, that 'beyond doubt the site of the boring is by far the best that the county of Sussex presents for the purpose.'

The works are in the parish of Netherfield, near to Battle, and in the property of J. C. Mappin, Esq. 'Slow and sure' may be the verdict pronounced with regard to the actual progress. A depth of about five hundred feet has now been reached. A visit to the spot shews that the good beginning that secures the good ending has been made, and also reveals the necessity there was for a long list of out-of-sight arrangements in order to prevent the possibility of collapse. The building in which the actual boring is carried on is in the centre of a wood, or rather large tract of woodland, and over the shallow bed of a small stream which is in a depressed valley. The visitor's difficulty in making way there, after leaving the high-road from Battle to Netherfield, may be regarded as somewhat emblematical of much that had to be overcome before 'Puffing Billy' could there exercise his power. Slub and mud had to be gone through, into, or over, for there was no possibility of picking out a good footing in the lane leading to the wood; and when that was itself reached, it was pathless. Though the underwood had been cut, stump and bramble combined in effort to impede progress, as if to shew that the 'pursuit of knowledge' was there and then to be carried on 'under difficulties.' Perhaps, when the east winds have done their duty, and the summer's sun has exercised his power, the

road may be pronounced clean and good by those who go to learn the final result of the great experiment. We speak only of the 'wintry stage, when frost and rain have had their sway.' The steam-engine has ceased to be a wonder, yet never, surely, did it convey a more significant hint of the march of intellect than when seen in that Sussex wood. It seemed as if bound to redeem the character of the 'Sussex folk,' so often charged with being slow and behindhand, when brought into comparison with those whose skill is exercised in manufacturing districts. Continental savants have expressed their surprise that hitherto not one single experiment for purely scientific purposes in the south-east of England has been made. That charge is now removed, and the local history and development of the county of Sussex becomes interwoven with the progress of scientific inquiry.

The boring is of nine inches diameter, and nothing can be actually seen when the dark deep hole is looked at. From it has been already drawn that which is likely to give a commercial value to the undertaking. It is not, however, the desired *black* mineral, but a *white* one; for gypsum has been struck. This was reached after passing through the mottled clays and shales. Specimens withdrawn in the progress of the works are kept, and carefully noted, so that nothing is lost, but everything is brought under observation in a manner tended to secure the greatest possible advantage. Geological inquiry and the remunerative feature being both equally regarded, the question of working the layer or bed of gypsum is already a matter of consideration with the landowners; no such accumulation of it having been hitherto discovered in the county. As if the scientific interest was in this undertaking to keep pace with the commercial feature, it may be noticed that the district has lately been visited by the gentlemen officially engaged in the Geological Survey, and by them it has been decided to subdivide the strata hitherto known as the Ashburnham beds into two divisions. The upper portion, consisting of the mottled clays and shales, will henceforth be called the Fairlight beds; while the lower portion, consisting of shelly limestone intermixed with calcareous shale and gypsum, will retain their old title. It has been long recognised that the Ashburnham beds in Sussex are the equivalent of the Purbeck beds in Dorsetshire, and it is now confidently anticipated that the Purbeck strata will be struck, in which case they will be hereafter known as the Sussex Purbecks.

From the first unfolding of the scheme, it was judged requisite that the boring should be carried down to the depth of two thousand feet, in order to secure the complete and perfect knowledge which the field of exploration offered; and, as we have seen, about a quarter of that depth is now reached. Enough has been discovered in each department to keep alive the interest of scientific friends, and to stimulate the hopes of those who are moved to judge of the value of the undertaking by the profit it will yield. It must here be noticed that subordinately to the grand question, What is the nature and thickness of the geological strata lying immediately beneath the lowest series of the Wealden formation? other inquiries are involved. It will surely be the means of making it known if the carboniferous strata, as in Belgium and the Bullinois district in France, extend across the Channel in the

direction of our south-east coast. The temperature of various depths will be ascertained by the methods and instruments recommended by the British Association Committee on Submarine Temperatures. The interest on this branch will culminate if the Palaeozoic rocks are reached, and the earliest forms of life become tested by the latest of modern improvements that has been applied to philosophical apparatus.

TRADERS' EPITAPHS.

THE literature of epitaphs is a curious one; not always of a very elevated character, and generally far removed from anything that can be called poetical, but highly characteristic of the whims and oddities of men. The really pious epitaphs are to be respected, whether poetical or not; but there are many in which the piety is certainly overborne by conceit of some kind or other. Not the least curious among them are those in which the trade or profession of the deceased is made the subject of a kind of punning—an application of technical terms to the course and termination of human life. The readers of the *Journal* can of course remember, or at least find by a little search, notices of many remarkable epitaphs; but we have never met with a collection of what may be designated trade epitaphs. At some cost of time and trouble, therefore, we present such a budget to the reader. A preliminary remark, must, however, be made. Some of these epitaphs were written by the persons whose death, at a future but unknown date, was to be recorded; some were written by their surviving relatives; while others were never engraved on any tombstone, but were in the nature of *jeux-d'esprit*, midway in character between the epitaph and the epigram.

Let us begin with a baker: Thomas Turar, buried in a Bristol churchyard in 1654. We should have preferred to avoid italicising the technical terms, but the epitaph-makers are fond of this, and we submit.)

Like to the baker's oven is the grave,
Wherein the bodyes of the faithful have
A setting in, and where they do remain,
In hopes to rise, and to be drawn again!
Blessed are they who in the Lord are dead;
Though set like dough,
They shall be drawn like bread.

Captain Morris, the celebrated song-writer, wit, and *bon-vivant*, wrote an epitaph on Edmund Hendson, thirty years cook to the Beefsteak Club; it is rather too long to be given entire, but is abundantly larded with such words and phrases as steak, dished, bastings, broils, juice, grain, chops, seasoned, and relished.

For a downright bit of misanthropy, an epitaph in an Irish churchyard is noteworthy:

Here lie the remains of JOHN HALL,
Grocer. The world is not worth a fig,
And I have good raisins for saying so.

Next we have a brewer :

Poor JOHN SCOTT lies buried here;
Tho' once he was both *hale* and *stout*,
Death stretch'd him on his *bitter bier*:
In another world he *hops* about.

Then a barber :

An honest man who lived by *shaving* you;
His *hairs* were many, and his graces few.

And then a handy fellow, who appears to have combined the trades of barber and tailor :

In a timber *surtout* here are wrap'd the remains
Of a mower of *beards* and a user of *skins*;
'Twas the *shears* of grim Death cut his *stay-tape* of life,
And *press'd* him away from *twist*, *razors*, and wife;
But the prayer of all people he *sew'd* for or *shav'd*,
Is that he's with the *remnant* of those that are sav'd.

To him succeeds a tailor who was not a barber :

Fate cuts the *thread* of life, as all men know;
And Fate cut his, tho' he so well could *see*.
It matters not how fine the *web* is spun,
'Tis all *unravell'd* when our course is run.

Here is a shoemaker, who (like many of the craft) was also a poet: one John Blackett, of Seaton :

Stranger, behold interr'd together
The souls of learning and of leather;
Poor JACK is gone, but left his all:
You'll find his relics in a stall;
His works were neat, and often found
Well stitch'd, and with morocco bound.
Tread lightly: where the bard is laid,
He cannot mend the shoes he made....
Then who shall say so good a fellow
Was only leather and prunella.

Among miscellaneous handcraftsmen, a card-maker presents himself :

His *card* is cut; long days he shuffl'd through
The game of life; he deal't as others do,
Though he by honours tells not its amount,
When the last trump is play'd, his tricks will count.

And then a dyer :

JOHN SPELLMAN's like will ne'er be found:
He dyed for all the country round;
Yet hear with patience, if you can,
The base ingratitude of man;
When Death approach'd, with aspect grim,
Not one of them would die for him;
So leaving all his worldly pelf,
Poor John at last died for himself.

A carpenter is sure to supply similes derived from his technical terms. Here is one John Spong, interred at Ockham in 1739:

Who many a sturdy oak has laid along,
Fell'd by Death's surer hatchet, here lies
JOHN SPONG.
Post oft he made, yet ne'er a place could get
And lived by railing, tho' he was no wit.
Old saws he had, although no antiquarian;
And stiles corrected, yet was no grammarian.
Long liv'd he Ockham's favourite architect,
And lasting as his fame a tomb t' erect,

In vain we seek an artist such as he,
Whose *pales* and *piles* were for eternity.

A woodcutter may be placed in companionship with the carpenter :

The Lord saw good, I was *lapping off wood*,
And down fell from the tree;
I went without check, and I broke my neck,
And so Death *lop'd* off me.

The trade of a watch and clock maker is rather rich in technical terms available to the epitaph-maker. Witness the following, in Lydford church-yard :

Here lies in *horizontal* position
The *outside case* of
GEORGE KOUTLEIGH, watchmaker,
Whose abilities in that line were an honour
To his profession ;
Integrity was the *main-spring*,
And prudence the *regulator*
Of all the *actions* of his life :
Humane, generous, and liberal,
His hand never stop'd
Till he had relieved distress :
So nicely *regulated* were all his movements,
That he never went wrong
Except when *set a-going*
By people
Who did not know
His *key*.
Even then, he was easily
Set right again.
He had the art of disposing of his time
So well,
That his *hours* glided away
In one continual round
Of pleasure and delight ;
Till an unlucky *moment* put a period to
His existence.
He departed this life
November 14, 1802,
Aged 57,
Wound up,
In hopes of being taken in *hand*
By his Master,
And of being
Thoroughly *clean'd, repair'd*, and *set a-going*.

A woman dealing in earthenware, in Cheshire, is the subject of an epitaph beginning :

Beneath this stone lies CATHERINE GRAY,
Chang'd to a lifeless lump of *clay* ;
By *earth* and *clay* she got her *pef*,
And now she's turned to *earth* herself.

The conclusion has an odd conceit concerning the possible recombination of material particles :

In some tall *pitcher* or *brown pan*,
She in her shop may be again.

Here is a blacksmith :

My *sledge* and *hammer* lie reclin'd,
My *bellows* too have lost their *wind* ;
My *fire*'s extinct, my *forge* decay'd,
And in the dust my *vice* is laid ;
My *coal* is spent, my *iron* gone,
My *nails* are driven, my work is done.

And here a coalheaver :

Cease to lament his change, ye just ;
He's only gone from *dust* to *dust*.

A printer's vocation is more than usually rich in technical terms, which lend themselves to the rhyming epitaph-maker :

No more shall *register* imperfect vex,
No more shall *friars* pale provoke my ire ;
No more shall *bites* or *picks* my work perplex,
No more the *devil's* aid shall I require ;
No more shall gloomy *monks* retard my way,
No more shall *overlays* my patience try ;
No more shall *batters* stop me half a day,
No more shall I the iron *frisket* fly ;
My *body* has been *overrun* with care,
My soul shall undergo a strict *revise* ;
And if my *Founder* thinks my *proof* is *fair*,
I quick shall join my Saviour in the skies.

That persons connected with church and church-yard matters should often be the subjects of curious epitaphs, need excite no wonder. Here is one on a Welsh organ-blower :

Under this stone lies MEREDITH MORGAN,
Who blew the *bellows* of our great *organ* ;
Tobacco he hated, to smoke most unwilling,
Yet never so pleased as when *pipes* he was filling ;
No puffer was he, tho' a capital *blower* ;
He could fill double *G*, and now lies a note lower.

William Lawes, the organist, lost his life in the civil wars of 1645 ; his epitaph is sarcastic rather than technical :

Concord is conquer'd ; in this urn there lies
The master of great musick's mysteries ;
And in it is a riddle like the cause ;
WILL LAWES was slain by those whose wills were
laws.

A bell-ringer :

To *ringing* from his youth he always took delight ;
Now his *bell* has *rung*, and his soul has ta'en its
flight ;
We hope to join the choir of heavenly singing,
That far excels the harmony of *ringing*.

A sexton and bell-ringer :

Here lyeth the body of honest JOHN CAPPER,
Who lived by the *bell*, and died by the *clapper*.

And here a sexton and gravestone cutter, who died at Selby in 1706 :

Here lies the body of poor FRANK ROW,
Parish clerk and gravestone cutter ;
And this is writ to let you know,
What Frank for others used to do,
Is now for Frank done by another.

Parker, a stage-coachman at Aylesbury, was well known before railway days :

PARKER, farewell ; thy *journey* now is ended,
Death his *whip hand* has raised, with dust thou'rt
blended ;
Thy *way-bill* is examined, and I trust
Thy last *account* may prove exactly just.

An exciseman who died at Alresford in 1750 :

No *supervisor's* *check* he fears,
Nor no *commissioner* obeys.

And a smuggler, the sworn foe of all excisemen :

Here I lies,
Kill'd by the X I S.

An agricultural labourer supplies a simile, which has had good use made of it by many other writers besides those of epitaphs :

He labour'd in the fields his *land* to gain ;
He plough'd, he sow'd, he reap'd the yellow grain ;
And now by Death from future service driven,
Is gone to keep his *harvest-home* in heaven.

A turnpike gate-keeper, who once had the honour of stopping George III. and demanding toll, died in 1805 ; and the great event was made to form part of his epitaph :

On Wednesday last old ROBERT HEATH
Passed through the *turnpike gate* of Death ;
To him no *toll* would Death abate,
Who stop'd the king at Worcester Gate.

One Thomas Bradshaw, interred at Maidstone in 1773, was a gamekeeper ; his death gave rise to an epitaph, in which great pride was evidently taken in the two concluding lines :

But that bold archer Death, who conquer's all,
Shot him to the heart, and caus'd him here to fall.

With the gamekeeper we associate a huntsman :

Here lies JOHN MILLS, who over hills
Pursued the *hounds* with *hollo* ;
The *leap*, though high, from earth to sky,
The *huntsman* we must follow.

A wrestler, whose name we are unable to give, was honoured thus :

Who thou, O Time, at length hast made thy prize,
Britain's first *wrestler*, lo, here prostrate lies,
By thee now *flung* : save thee he conquer'd all ;
When he shall rise again, thou too shalt fall.

Among professional men, we find a coroner, who put an end to his own existence :

He lived and died
By suicide.

And Quin the actor :

The *scene* is chang'd, I am no more,
Death's the *last act*—now all is o'er.

And Woollett the engraver :

Here WOOLLETT lies, contented to be saved :
Who *engraved* well, but is not well en-graved.

Our space is exhausted, though our budget is not ; we will therefore finish with Dean Swift's epitaph on the notorious John Partridge :

Here, five feet deep, lies on his back
A cobbler, star-monger, and quack ;
Who to the stars, in pure good will,
Does to his best look upward still.
Weep, all you customers who use
His pills, his almanacs, or shoes ;
And you that did your fortunes seek,
Step to his grave but once a week ;
This earth, which bears his body's print,
You'll find has so much virtue in 't,

That if you give good heed, 'twould tell
Whate'er concerns you just as well,
In physic, stolen goods, or love,
As he himself could when above.

M A R I A N.

CHAPTER XXI.

MARIAN, too, was watching by a sick-bed during that time of sorrow and anxiety at Ellisdean. Miss Gilmour was not dangerously ill ; but though she struggled to disbelieve it, she had, in fact, had a slight stroke of paralysis, which, though not severe enough to impair her mental faculties, made her sufficiently helpless to require constant attendance and constant soothing also, which it was more difficult to give. The doctor had ordered profound quiet, but how could the prescription be carried out ? Marian did her utmost, but all her entreaties could not keep her aunt from insisting on seeing her lawyer, and charging him herself with the most vindictive instructions respecting the 'thief and impostor who had got into her house and stolen her jewels, and dared to say that she was Neil's wife.'

But when Marian could no longer persuade her to defer summoning Neil himself to her presence, she was forced to tell her that he had disappeared. In the confusion following Miss Gilmour's first seizure, he had returned to Holly Bank, but only for a few minutes, to pack up and carry away some of his clothes. He had spoken to no one, and left no message or letter. Mr Stronach had, however, discovered that he had gone to Glasgow.

Perhaps, in spite of her rejection of the tale she had heard, some conviction of its truth had been penetrating Miss Gilmour's mind, for she heard of Neil's suspicious flight with more composure than Marian expected. But grief and agitation would have seemed less dreadful than this composure, and Marian was horrified at the stern, vengeful bitterness which now seemed to take possession of the old woman's breast, and to be changing all her affection for Neil into positive hatred—a hatred which seemed resolved to prove itself, too, in deeds as well as words.

Mr Stronach had done his best to persuade her to give up the intention she expressed of prosecuting the woman in whose possession the jewels had been found. She seemed equally ready to prosecute Neil himself, should the theft be traced to him. Marian had pleaded and remonstrated in vain ; the doctor had argued to no purpose. Late one evening, he and Mr Stronach had left the house after a fruitless struggle with their obstinate client and patient. It had been arranged that proceedings for the prosecution were to be taken next day. Miss Gilmour was satisfied and triumphant. Marian had gone down-stairs to the parlour to make her some tea. It was almost the first time that she herself had had a few minutes' leisure to think, and now a tempest of contending thoughts was in her mind. Already a vague report of the accident which had happened to Everard Crawford

had reached her, but not until that evening had she heard from the doctor that he was dying, that his parents and sister were at Ellisdean, and that Frank had been summoned home.

And now, shocked as she was, and full of sympathy for his family, she could not but feel that Everard's death was a severe blow to her own hopes. Her letter to him had not been answered, and she was forced to conclude that he had not meant to answer it, for she had been misinformed as to the exact date of the accident. Yet how could she bring forward any accusation against him now? How could she intrude on the sorrowing circle at Ellisdean her own complaints and questionings? What could she do but remain, for the present at least, silent? And then, must she not remember that a great change had taken place in Frank's position and prospects! He was the heir of Ellisdean now. She knew that nothing should have prevented her from seeking an explanation with him if he had been still the poor younger brother. But now that everything was changed, it would be far more difficult, if not impossible, for her to do so.

There was only the chance of their meeting when he came home, and in the thought of that possible chance there was still a rapturous joy. The meeting might indeed only bring with it the final extinction of hope; but it was the one gleam of light for her in the future. Her own immediate prospects were completely uncertain. Her aunt was willing enough to have her with her in the meantime, as long as she required her services; but either because the attack had made Miss Gilmour's temper still more fretful, or because she had still not forgiven her niece for her proposal to leave her, she spoke to her even more harshly and unkindly than before, and taunted her so often about her appeal to 'her friend Mrs Richardson,' that Marian believed she still meant to allow her to carry out her own hastily formed project, and to let her leave Holly Bank whenever she was well enough to spare her. Was there any chance, then, that she would be there when Frank came home?

She was lingering over her tea-making, glad of the few minutes' leisure for thought, although her thoughts were so painful and distracting, when she heard the well-known sound of Neil Gilmour's key turning the lock of the hall door, and then his step in the passage; the next moment he was in the parlour.

'Marian, thank Heaven I've found you alone. I must see Aunt Sarah, this very night.'

'You can't see her; she is not equal to it; and besides, she is too angry with you. You had better keep out of her sight, unless— O Neil, is this all true? Or have you come to explain things to her? If so, I will tell her, and try to get her to see you. It may not be too late,' said Marian earnestly, as she remembered her aunt's ruthless orders to Mr Stronach.

'God bless you! I thought I might trust to you,' said Neil gratefully, holding out his hand to her. But she shrank back. She was afraid of him no longer; but her disgust at his behaviour was too deep for her to give him her hand in friendship, and perhaps a little natural womanly resentment at having been duped into believing in his love

mingled in the feeling, though at the same time her generosity and love of justice made her willing that he should have a fair chance still to defend himself as he best could.

'I see: you won't be friends with me, though you know I can do you no harm now,' he said bitterly. 'Well, I can't help it. I believe, Marian, you're the only one that will do me a good turn yet, and I'll trust you. It would have been better for me, perhaps, if I'd trusted you at once. Yes, I've come to explain things, as you say, but God knows if my explanation will do me much good—with her. It's true, then. I'm married; I've been married these four years.'

'O Heavens! why did you not tell us?' cried Marian in anguish. 'Oh, what you have made me suffer!'

'I meant to tell,' he said gloomily. 'We came home—from Australia, that is—my wife and I, meaning to confess everything. I knew I had but a poor chance of getting Aunt Sarah to forgive me; that's why I never wrote. I dared not tell her of my marriage; and—and I thought it would be better for some years to let her fancy I was dead; I thought it might soften her. At last, when everything else seemed to go wrong with me, and we got into such straits that I didn't know where to turn for a living, we came back to Scotland. I left Norah and her babies in Glasgow, and I came on here. I did mean to tell the whole truth about myself; but when I arrived, you were away at Ellisdean; and Aunt Sarah was so glad to see me, and spoke at once so eagerly and decidedly about my marrying you and settling here, shewing that her mind was as much set on this plan as ever, that

— The devil tempted me, I suppose, for I should have been wiser, perhaps, to have held to my first intention; and I thought I might as well let her fancy that I at least was still ready to do as she wished. I didn't mean to interfere between you and young Crawford; but I thought, you know, that I might seem generous to you, and at the same time give Aunt Sarah no reason to be angry with me, and so I would get her to let me have some money, and go away back to Australia. Then I was ill, and she was obstinate, and I found things went differently from what I had intended; but it was too late for me to change my plans then. And then, often I was tempted to speak out to you, but I dared not. A word from you might have ruined me, and I knew you must be eager only to get rid of me. I was afraid to trust my secret to you. Then, when I couldn't get her to give me money enough to go away—when I couldn't even get enough out of her to pay my debts in Glasgow, and keep my wife and children, I grew desperate, and I fell on that plan—that you wouldn't agree to. If you had married Frank Crawford, I thought that, out of gratitude to me, you might have done something for me; but that plan failed too, you know, and I saw that you would have to remain here with her, and I knew there was no way of contenting her but trying to get you to become engaged to me. So at last, when I lost all hope of your coming round to what I proposed, I had nothing for it but to take these cursed jewels, which she herself had, as it were, thrown into my hands, for you know she had left that bureau open. And she had told me she was keeping them for my wife,' he added with a sardonic smile. 'Poor Norah! I repeated that, to her to satisfy her scruples, for she was loath to have

anything to do with them ; ay, she was wiser than I, for they've brought us mischief enough.'

'Your wife ! She did not know that—that—'

'That they were stolen goods? No. She didn't know that, and she doesn't know other things. Do you think I've told her all the shifts I've been put to since I came here ? Poor girl ; she's had a hard enough struggle of her own ; and, Marian—his voice softened now—the end of it is, that she's in jail at this moment ; and I, who have done all the mischief—Marian, Marian, if you've a heart in your breast you'll help me now, whether I deserve it or not. Get me speech of Aunt Sarah for two minutes. I'll do anything—I'll go through any humiliation—but I must get my wife out of prison. If she won't give up prosecuting her, as she means to do, I'll go and give myself up—only for poor Norah's own sake, and the children. Marian, say you'll do something ! Norah is innocent, if I'm not. She's only a poor girl—a poor Irish girl, who couldn't read or write her own name when I married her ; but she's been a good wife to me.'

'Stay here,' said Marian, after a minute's silence. 'I'll go and speak to Aunt Sarah.'

She took the cup of tea she had prepared, and went up-stairs. As she placed the cup on the table by her aunt's bedside, the invalid looked at her.

'What's your hand shaking for like that ?' she said sharply. 'You've spilt the tea. If you can't wait on me better than that, Marian, you can go away, and send Barbara. I'm sure I don't know what use you are to me.'

'Aunt Sarah, you don't want me to go away from you altogether ?' said Marian tremulously.

'Humph ! You said you would go away, and why should I keep you ? You're mistaken if you think I can't do without you.'

'I know you could do without me. But—but I don't want to leave you, if you'll let me stay.'

'Ay, you're ready to stay, now that you hear Frank Crawford's coming home.'

Marian flushed crimson. Then she said : 'Yes, it's true, aunt ; I do want to see him. But—'

'I thought so ! Well, if that's all you want, you can go and stay with your friend Mrs Richardson. I'm not wanting you here.'

'Aunt Sarah, don't speak to me so. I want to stay with you for other reasons than that. I want to be useful to you, indeed I do. And I want you to let me—try to make peace between you and Neil.'

Poor Marian sighed over her bungling attempt to introduce her petition ; but indeed she hardly knew what to say.

'Neil ! I'll have nothing more to do with you or Neil either. A fine way you've both repaid me for all I've done for you. He's done nothing but rob and cheat me ; and you—you're ready to go away and leave me.'

'I'm not ready to leave you. O Aunt Sarah, let me stay !'

'If Frank Crawford asks you again, you'll leave me, though ?'

There was a silence.

'I thought so !' Miss Gilmour repeated again, and now she broke into querulous weeping. 'You care nothing for me. Neil's gone, and you'll go ; and I'll be left a poor solitary old woman, with no one to care for me.'

'Aunt Sarah, I won't leave you !'

'Will you promise me that?' Miss Gilmour muttered through her peevish sobs.

'I promise you, aunt. But will you do one thing for me in return ?'

'What's that ?'

'Neil is down-stairs. Will you see him ? O Aunt Sarah, he wants to see you. He wants to tell you everything. I—I think there is some good in him still.' And scarcely daring to wait for an answer, she went to the door and made a sign to Neil, who was waiting on the stairs.

'Come back ! Marian, Marian, don't leave me alone. You've promised to stay with me,' her aunt cried. 'You've promised not to leave me. If you go, he'll come, and cheat me and torment me again.'

'Hush, hush, Aunt Sarah. He can't cheat you any more now. And I won't leave you ; I've promised.'

CHAPTER XXII.

Miss Gilmour was getting better. Her naturally tough constitution promised to recover from the shock it had received ; and the doctor told Marian that he should not wonder if her health became even stronger than it had lately been. 'Her bodily health, at least,' said he ; and Marian understood that mind and temper were not to be expected to shew no signs of decay. She very soon, indeed, discovered that a change had come over her aunt, which, during the early part of her illness, had been imperceptible ; and perhaps this change accounted for the apparent ease with which Marian had succeeded in getting her to see Neil, and to accept a sort of reconciliation with him, even to promise him a little money to take him and his wife back to Australia, and settle him there. Marian had been astonished at her own success, and had flattered herself with the hope that her influence with her aunt was now established. By-and-by she saw that the happy results of her mediation had been due to the almost rash precipitation with which she had acted, and which had overpowered her aunt's feeble will. When Miss Gilmour was humoured and obeyed as before, she could be as hard and tyrannical as ever.

But Marian had been so long accustomed to humour and obey her in all ordinary matters, that she would not have thought of thwarting her now, and would have shrunk from the seeming unkindness of resisting her petty caprices when these did not injure her health. And Miss Gilmour was sensible enough to take pretty good care of her health, and therefore found herself at liberty to indulge her ill temper at the expense of her gentle nurse's strength and patience. Marian's heart grew heavy as she foresaw the years of slavery in store for her, but she imprudently made no attempt to shake off the yoke at once. Nay, she became gradually forced to submit to another, and still more humiliating tyranny, for Barbara's energy and decision not being restrained by any consideration for her mistress's feelings, now enabled her to assert an authority over her which Miss Gilmour had hitherto resisted. Barbara soon bade fair to be the real ruler of the house.

In the meantime, Marian had had almost no communication with Ellisdean. She had written a few lines of condolence to Kate, but she could not help writing with a certain constraint ; and

Kate's answer, constrained and still more formal than her own note had been, made her almost wish, as she cried over it tears of wounded pride and affection, that she had not written at all. Then weeks had gone on without her hearing more, until one day the doctor chanced to mention that Mr Frank Crawford had arrived, and that the family were about to leave for Ventnor, where Mrs Everard Crawford was ordered.

'I've just been in Whiteford,' said the doctor, 'ordering an invalid carriage for her to-morrow. The sooner they take her away from Ellisdean the better, poor thing. They've only been waiting for Mr Frank's arrival; and now they'll start at once, without delay.'

Marian stood by her aunt's chair as usual while the doctor went on asking his questions and giving his directions, and exerted herself to attend to his instructions about food and physic; and even tried to smile and talk cheerfully with him, out of gratitude for his good-natured attempt to amuse them by repeating his little scraps of Whiteford news. When he was gone, Miss Gilmour became impatient for a pudding which he had recommended.

'But the cook is out, Aunt Sarah, and I'm afraid Barbara is busy,' said Marian, who knew that Barbara would have promptly repressed any irregular longings for puddings at this inconvenient hour. Miss Gilmour fretted on.

'It's hard I can't get what I want in my own house. It's just like you, Marian. You never think of me.'

'Dear Aunt Sarah, I'll tell the cook the moment she comes in, about the pudding. Let me do something to amuse you now. Shall I read to you?'

She took the book—the dull old-fashioned commentary which Miss Gilmour occasionally chose to have read to her, and began. It was hard to steady her voice, to sit there quietly and read, keeping her tones at the proper pitch, and try not to think of Frank, and not to think that they were all going away to-morrow. She got through a page or two, however. Then Miss Gilmour, who had still been grumbling and muttering to herself, burst out again.

'It's hard I can't get that pudding when I want it. I'm sure, Marian, you might make it for me if you liked. But I don't know what use you are—you don't choose to trouble yourself to do anything for me.'

'I'll go and try to make it for you,' said Marian, half-thankful to get away, though she dreaded having to invade the kitchen and face Barbara, and doubted also her own culinary skill.

Barbara's reception was, as she expected, sufficiently disagreeable. Marian tried to seem unconscious of the insolence intended, and meekly proceeded with her cookery, while the angry servant made a warlike clatter round the fireplace with dust-pans and shovels. But one or two salt tears nearly went to the composition of the pudding, though she succeeded in shielding it from the dust intended for it. Life was very dreary.

The cook came in, her red face redder than usual; Marian was about to give up her task to her. 'Did you no hear the bell, Barbara?' said she reproachfully to her fellow-servant. 'I had to go to the door myself.—It's the folk from Ellisdean, Miss Keir. They're in the parlour.'

Marian rushed up-stairs. The parlour door was open, and there stood Lady Augusta and Kate. In another moment she was in Lady Augusta's arms.

A GLIMPSE OF THE FUTURE.

'WELL, I think I can tell you how we all came to be so fond of flowers, and to be able to grow them, and a few vegetables also.'

The speaker was apparently a well-to-do mechanic, neat and tidy in his appearance, and with a greater look of intelligence and refinement in his countenance than is common among people of his class; his auditors were strangers from a distant part of the country, to whom the pretty, tasteful, and well-cultivated gardens attached to the cottages about them were evidently novelties.

'You see, when I was a young man just out of my apprenticeship, there was a great to-do in this city of ours among what were called the working-classes—just as if many a man who never soils his hands has not to work hard with his head sometimes—about shorter hours, higher wages, and so on. I daresay the masters and men had each some cause to complain of each other, but I am not going to enter into their quarrels and battles; I only say, that after years of bother, matters were arranged on a basis apparently satisfactory to both parties. When that was the case, the men had a great deal more money to spend, and more time in which to spend it, than they ever had before. Few suitable means of getting rid of this time and money were available to them. Their faculties were not trained so as to enable them to enjoy the various museums and other interesting institutions which were open to them; and these, although professedly free to all, were in general hedged round with many irksome rules and regulations, rendering them distasteful to the very classes they were intended to benefit. In short, they did not, for one reason or other, take advantage of the means of improvement at their disposal.'

'Instead, then, of attempting to ameliorate their condition by mental cultivation, the majority of men, after their day's work was over, spent their evenings in drink-shops and singing-saloons, to the great profit of the publicans and the benefit of the revenue; but a few, of whom I was one, used to take good long walks in the country, thereby enjoying the pure air, and the many and beautiful objects which nature so liberally provides for the benefit of every one. In some of our rambles we had often to pass nursery-gardens, which always stood temptingly open, as if inviting us to enter and inspect them. When we had summoned up courage enough to go inside, we found no one to interfere with us, and we were welcome to wander about just as we pleased, and to see whatever was to be seen. If at any time we made any inquiries of the workmen, they answered them with the greatest civility, and appeared anxious to impart any information which was in their power, and by so doing interested several of us so much about

flowers, that we resolved, on the first opportunity we had, to visit the Botanic Gardens, where we hoped to learn much that we could not do in the nurseries, as we were unreasonable enough to suppose that, as those gardens were for the public benefit, there would be some properly qualified officials there to enlighten the ignorance of the visitors. The Botanic Gardens were very fine then, but not nearly so much so as they are now. In those days the entrance to them was only by a paltry little door in a high dead-wall, evidently intended to prevent the interior arrangements being seen by passers-by, and reminding one far more of the entrance to a lunatic asylum, jail, or penitentiary, than a place for recreation. On ringing a bell, an attendant appeared and opened the door just wide enough to admit us. He cast rather a suspicious glance at us, and evidently thought it very hard to have been put to the trouble of opening the door for us. I remember that over the door there was a notice about the hours when the gardens were open and when shut to the public, and part of it was, that from six till eight on Saturday evenings during summer they were open for the benefit of the working-classes. None of us could at all make out why only one evening of the week was allowed for this very large section of the community, as every other night as well as Saturday could be made available by some portion of it, especially now that the short-time movement was fairly inaugurated. Whatever idea the authorities might have intended, we took the notice as a sort of hint that the working-classes' company could be dispensed with at all other times; and we could not help thinking how much better it would be were the gardens open every evening till sun-down, so that all classes whatsoever might come with their children, whose school-hours would be over, to enjoy the many pleasant sights to be seen within the walls.

'This first visit of mine was, however, the means of giving me a new interest in life, for which I have ever since been very thankful; and I fancy that, from what I then saw and heard, I have been useful in increasing the happiness and comfort of many of my fellow-workmen.

'Whilst walking through the conservatories, palm-houses, &c. feasting our eyes on all the glorious splendour they contained, we happened to overtake a party of jolly, good-natured-looking sailors, who were evidently well pleased to see growing here many plants, trees, and flowers with which they had formed a kind of acquaintance during their wanderings about the world, but apparently thought little of them here when compared with the specimens they had seen abroad, and were quite as much bewildered as we were at the prodigiously long names that some of the things were labelled with. "Why, look ye here," said one of them to his companions, "whatever do they give this little chap—not big enough to make a tholepin for the dingy—a name as long as the mainto' bowline for?" Should any one remark to me that

such-and-such a thing was as big as a lump of chalk, or as long as a bit of string, I would at once know what he meant, because everybody knows what they are; but to my mind the mainto'-bowline was only an embodiment of a straight line, length without breadth or thickness, and as I wanted to know something more about it, I asked the sailor what it was. Instead of answering me, he only stared at me for a while with the greatest amazement, and turning to his shipmates, said: "Well, boys, longshore folk call us ignorant, but did any mortal man ever see a fellow on board come to that one's time o' life who didn't know what the mainto'-bowline was! Why, I expect he wouldn't know the best bower from the cook's tormentors, were he to see them together! But, I say, what's the use of staying in here, looking at these things? we see enough of them when we're away from home. Let's go outside, and have a roll on the grass, for we can't see a bit of turf like that except in the old country." So, commiserating my ignorance, they left me to have their roll on the nice velvety turf, whilst I staid behind, pitying the taste of any one who would prefer a patch of grass to contemplating the beauty of the exotics.

'I strolled away from my companions, and found the very commonest flowers with names I could not understand; but pondering on the subject, I saw that owing to the enormous multiplicity and variety of plants, some accurately distinct appellations common to all countries were necessary. It was rather painful to see so few people taking anything like an intelligent interest in the plants set out for their instruction. The most of them only admired the flowers. In the fine shady walks, ladies and gentlemen, generally young, were seen lounging along in pairs; the lady intently examining the toes of her boots, and poking holes in the gravel-walks with the point of her parasol; and the gentleman quite as intently examining the lady's ear, or perhaps watching her curls—they used to be worn in those days—and both seemingly much at a loss for anything to say to each other. The gardens, in fact, were more a lounge for idlers than anything else.

"Perhaps the sight of so many plants, native and foreign, in time works a revolution in the feelings. In my own case, I felt no small enjoyment in my rambles. My mind was, as it were, opening on a new world of rational pleasure. As often as I possibly could, I returned for a walk in the gardens, and always brought some of my companions with me, till at last quite a large number of young men and women began to take an interest in flowers, and to entertain a desire to obtain information about them. So we got an obliging young gardener to come when his work was over, and tell us as much as he knew about the plants and flowers. By-and-by this gathering became a regular class; and it was soon observable that those who attended it began to shew a great deal more taste and neatness, not only in their dress, but in their general household arrangements.

'Here, then, was the beginning of a social reformation, all arising from the habit of looking at plants and flowers. The authorities saw this, and appointed a gentleman to give popular lectures on the vegetable kingdom. The Latin and Greek names were translated into English equivalents, and although they still continued of a considerable length, they were in a language we all knew, and they therefore conveyed some meaning to our minds, and were more easily remembered. These lectures were very largely attended, and the gardens came to be so very much frequented, that they were kept open till sunset every day, and the blank-wall was pulled down, and replaced by the fine open railing and ever-open gate which is there now, affording a refreshing peep to all who are passing. About the same time, too, the magistracy of the city was busy pulling down the old lanes and closes with which it abounded, and letting more air in about it; and some speculators, finding so many people taking to gardening, built cottages in the suburbs, where they could have bits of garden-ground attached to them. Then the people who took those cottages discovered that they wanted to know something about vegetables as well as about flowers, and, by dint of determination, got a suitable portion of the garden set apart where the best sorts could be grown, and where people could be taught the best modes of growing them.

'Such I believe to be the reason why so many men in and about our city have gardens, and know how to cultivate them; and how their wives, seeing them take so much pride in their outdoor neatness and decoration, and vegetables, soon learned to keep all indoors neat and tidy, and to have the well-grown vegetables well cooked. In consequence, also, of this taste for horticulture, the men had to consult books on the subject, and soon had little libraries. But reading gardening-books led them into reading about other subjects, and you will now see in almost every cottage a few shelves of well-selected works by the most intelligible authors in almost every department of science. What a grand future would open on the condition of the manual labouring classes generally, were they simply to begin to take an interest in flowers! With improved tastes all else would follow. Even now, in some places we are favoured with a glimpse of that greatly to be desired future.'

AT A COUNTRY DINNER-PARTY.

'Monast flowers from glassy tropics brought
I sat, and mused who sat around—
What they loved best; but half a thought
With most the answer found.

These aldermanic sires who gape
On rank, but look askant at fame,
Worship vile gold, and proudly ape
The glint of ancient name.

Here jewelled matrons drawled their song
Of youth's wild oats, and shook the head,
Condemning absent friends who long
Their lingering girls to wed.

And others down the board I heard,
'O'er flashing plate and crystal, rail
On rents and coal; 'Strikes! how absurd'
'How much potatoes fail.'

But opposite a maiden gleamed;
Like Autumn's harebells shone her eyes;
A radiant white-clad angel seemed
She, 'mongst our social lies.

Swift was her sympathetic smile,
Simple her hopes and joys, I ween;
Her pure true nature knew no guile;
What guile knows sweet sixteen?

I told a tale of valour, how
One greatly dared and died, to win
A name; the quick blood flushed her brow,
And shewed the heart within.

I told of small and ill-paid hire,
The village tyrant—how his poor
He ground down—and her eyes flashed fire,
A woman now no more!

I watched, sweet Edith, every mood;
I blessed you in my heart of hearts;
Your mem'ry fills my soul with good
Thoughts, though vast space us parts.

And then I said Adieu! and dashed
Alone into the stormy night;
Homewards through mud and water splashed,
But yet held you in sight.

You went all unawares to bed,
Unwitting that your tell-tale face
Had touched my fancy, that I sped
Home conquered by your grace.

Oft to remembrance day and night,
Your eyes, love's heaven, in dreams will come;
How blest the man who'll see their light
Irradiate his home!

Man would the world regenerate,
To-day's fond scheme the past will flout;
Her kindly ends the while we prate
True womanhood works out.

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